

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----140915Z 129788 /11

R 131530Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3511
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY LON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ABIDJAN 4958

EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS ALL AF POSTS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, XJ, US
SUBJECT: AFRICA COM CONFERENCE

1. FOLLOWING IS SUMMARY OD DISCUSSION LEAD BY SOUTHERN AFRICAN
PANEL AT BIDJAN COM MEETING.

2. THE PANEL MET WITHOUT THE BENEFIT OF THE VIEW FROM
PRETORIA/CAPE TOWN. IT FOCUSED CHIEFLY ON THE SITUATION
AND PROSPECTS FOR SOLUTION IN RHODESIA. IT RECOGNIZED THE
IMPORTANCE OF NAMIBIA BOTH IN PROVIDING AN OPPORTUNITY
FOR CONSULTATION WITH THE FRONT LINE STATES AND AS
EVIDENCE OF THE U.S. COMMITMENT TO CONTINUE WORKING
ON THE PROBLEMS OF THE AREA.
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3. THE GROUP NOTED THE SKEPTICISM WITH WHICH AFRICAN
GOVERNMENTS IN THE AREA NOW VIEW THE CURRENT US/UK
INITIATIVE TO NEGOTIATE A CONSTITUTION FOR INDEPENDENT
ZIMBABWE. FOR THE TIME EING, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE MAJOR
PREOCCUPATION OF AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS AND MEDIA IN THE AREA
IS WITH THE BUILDUP OF MILITARY FORCES. IRREGULAR WARFARE IS
BECOMING A WAY OF LIFE FROM WHICH IT IS GETTING HARDER
AND HARDER TO WITHDRAW. AT THIS STAGE, AFRICANS ARE NOT EN-
GAGED IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS.

4. WE THEREFORE BELIEVE THE PROCESS MUST BEGIN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, DISCUSSING THE CONCRETE TERMS OF A CONSTITUTION SO AS TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON A NEGOTIATING ALTERNATIVE, ENGAGE AFRICAN INTEREST, AND BEGIN TO BUILD MOMENTUM FOR A SETTLEMENT BY NEGOTIATION. IN OUR VIEW, THE PROCESS IS ALMOST AS THE SPECIFIC SUBSTANCE OF THE PROVISIONS BEING DISCUSSED.

5. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS THE PANEL'S VIEW THAT THE CHANCES ARE NOT GREAT FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE OWEN INITIATIVE IN ITS PRESENT FORM FOR THREE REASONS:

(A) OUR LEVERAGE WITH THE WHITE REGIMES IS LIMITED AND APPLIES LARGELY TO SOUTH AFRICA WHERE OUR PARTNER (THE UK) IS EXTREMELY RELUCTANT TO JOIN US IN ITS EXERCISE;

(B) WE HAVE SEEN NO CONCING SIGN YET THAT SMITH IS PREPARED TO COOPERATE SUFFICIENTLY TO REACH A SOLUTION. IT IS OUR UNANIMOUS VIEW THAT UNLESS HE IS PREPARED TO STEP ASIDE AT A FAIRLY EARLY POINT IN THE PROCESS, THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF ANY KIND OF SETTLEMENT.

(C) THE DIVISION AMONG AFRICAN NATIONALIST CONTINUES AND IS LIEKLEY TO GROW RATHER THAN LESSEN AS AN ULTIMATE SOLUTION APPROACHES. THEIR INSECURITY AND CONSEQUENT CONFIDENTIAL

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HESITANCEY TO TRUST THEIR FUTURE TO THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS MAY ALSO GROW.

6. IN SPITE O F THIS, WE BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAKE A TRY AT THE NEGOTIATIONS. NOT ONLY BECAUSE THE PROCESS ITSELF CONTAINS ITS OWN DYNAMIC, BUT ALSO BECAUSE IT IS WELL CONCEIVED. AGREEMENT ON THE TERMS OF A CONSTITUTION AND A MULTI-RACIAL CARETAKER GOVERNMENT, WHICH WOULD PLAY NO ROLE IN AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE, SHOULD BE POSSIBLE AND DO NOT PRESENT THE OBSTACEL OF SETTING UP AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT.

7. AT THIS POINT ONLY TWO ALTERNATIVES SEEM POSSIBLE; NAMELY, A NEGOTIATED SOLUPON OR ONE THAT IS IMPOSED BY MILITARY FORCE. THE TWO ARE BEING PURSUED SIMULTANEOUSLY. THERE APPEAR TO BE A NUMBER OF PATHS OR TRACKS WHICH EFFORTS TOWARD EITHER OF THESE SOLUTIONS COULD TAKE FROM THIS POINT FORWARD. NEXT WEEK WE WILL BEGIN AGAIN TO TEST A NEGOTIATING ROUTE WHICH ONE COULD CALL A "CONSTITUTIONAL PATH". THIS PROCESS APPEARS TO FACE THREE MAJOR OBSTACLES:

8. FIRST, I SMITH'S INTRANSIGENCE WHICH, IF MAINTAINED, CAN ONLY LEAD TO CONTINUED WARFARE AND EVENTUAL IMPOSITION OF A MILITARY SOLUTION. SECOND IS THE BREAKDOWN OF CON-

STITUTIONAL NEGOTIATIONS OVER THE SUBSTANCE OF ONE OR ANOTHER OF ITS PROVISIONS. THE MOST LIKELY OBSTACLE APPEARS TO BE THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR INTEGRATING THE THREE SEPARATE ARMIES IN EXISTENCE (ZANLA, ZAPRA, AND THE EXISTING ARMED FORCES OF RHODESIA). IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT ANY SOLUTION OF THIS PROBLEM WILL REQUIRE THE PRESENCE OF OUTSIDE MILITARY ELEMENTS. IN THE EVENT OF BREAKDOWN IN NEGOTIATIONS, THE FIGHTING WOULD CONTINUE UNTIL EITHER A NEW NEGOTIATION, PROBABLY BASED ON AN INTERNAL ARRANGEMENT, OR A MILITARILY IMPOSED SOLUTION RESULTS. THIRD WOULD BE REFUSAL BY AN INCREASINGLY
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STRONG PATRIOTIC FRONT TO SUBMIT ITSELF TO AN ELECTION PROCESS WHICH FOLLOWED AGREEMENT ON THE PROVISIONS OF A CONSTITUTION. JUST HOW THIS REFUSAL OCCURED WOULD BE OF CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE. IT SEEMS LIKELY, IN ANY CASE, TO LEAD TO A NEW AND DIFFERENT NEGOTIATING EFFORT AS WELL AS TO CONTINUED WARFARE.

9. THE OTHER KIND OF NEGOTIATED SOLUTION WOULD INVOLVE ELEMENTS OF, BUT NOT ALL, THE PRESENT NATIONALIST FORCES, AND CAN BE DESCRIBED AS INTERNAL SOLUTION BETWEEN RHDESIAN WHITES AND NATIONALISTS. AN ATTEMPT VIA THIS ROUTE WOULD UNDOUBTELY FOLLOW BREAKDOWN OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL PATH. ITS CHANCES OF SUCCESS WOULD BE INCREASED BY THE FOLLOWING FACTORS:

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R 131530Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3512
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
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AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ABIDJAN 4958

EXDIS

(A) SMITH'S WILLINGNESS TO TAKE HIMSELF PERSONALLY
OUT OF THE PICTURE AT AN EARLY STAGE;

(B) AN ELECTION WHICH HAS SOME KIND OF INTERNATIONAL
INVOLVEMENT AND SUPERVISION, DIFFICULT AS THIS MAY BE;

(C) ACQUIESCENCE BY NKOMO AND IMPORTANT ELEMENTS
OF THE MATABELE TRIBAL GROUP.

10. IN ANY CASE, IT WAS CLEAR TO US THAT THE WARFARE
WOULD CONTINUE EVEN IF THIS ROUTE WERE FOLLOWED TO ITS
CONCLUSION. SOME MEMBERS OF THE GROUP FELT THAT IT
WOULD LEAD TO UNLIMITED CIVIL WAR AND THAT NO SETTLEMENT
WAS POSSIBLE WITHOUT INCLUSION OF MEMBERS OF THE FIGHTING
FORCES OF THE ZANU GROUP, INCLUDING PEOPLE LIKE TONGAGARA
AND NHONGO. OTHERS FELT THAT IF A BLACK GOVERNMENT WERE FIRMLY
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INSTALLED UNDER THE ABOVE CIRCUMSTANCES, EVEN
WITHOUT THE ABOVE FORCES, THE COMMITMENT OF MANY MEMBERS
OF THESE FORCES NECESSARY FOR CONTINUED FIGHTING WOULD
BE GREATLY LESSENERED AND THE NEW GOVERNMENT COULD MAINTAIN
ITSELF AGAINST CONTINUED VIOLENCE FROM THIS QUARTER.

11. WHATEVER NEGOTIATIONS ARE UNDERTAKEN, THEY MUST
IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER TAKE ACCOUNT OF PROVIDING PLACE
IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT FOR ELEMENTS OF THE FIGHTING FORCES
AND PERMITTING SOME KIND OF SELECTION PROCESS UNDER WHICH
THE ZIMBABWEANS CAN REGISTER THEIR CHOICE FOR THE INDE-
PENDENT NATION'S GOVERNMENT. IT IS NOT BEYOND THE REALM OF
POSSIBILITY THAT AN ULTIMATE SOLUTION WOULD INCLUDE ARMED
FORCES UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ONE GROUP (E.G. ZANU) AND
THE GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED BY A DIFFERENT ONE (E.G., MUZOREWA).
HOWEVER UNSATISFACTORY, SUCH A SOLUTION MAY WELL BE THE ONLY
ONE ON WHICH AGREEMENT IS POSSIBLE.

12. THE PANEL BELIEVED THAT TWO WARNINGS MERITED THE
CONFERENCE'S ATTENTION.

(A) FIRST, IT CONSIDERS THAT THE STRENGTHENING OF
SANCTIONS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA WILL BECOME AN INCREASING
PREOCCUPATION OF THE FRONT LINE AND EVENTUALLY OTHER AFRICAN
STATES. THE LEADING ITEMS FOR PRESSURE IN THIS AREA ARE GASOLINE
AND OIL. EFFECTIVENESS OF SANCTIONS ON RHODESIA IS HIGHLY
QUESTIONABLE DUE TO THE FACT THAT RHODESIA CONSUMES ONLY FIVE
TO 10 PERCENT OF SOUTH AFRICA'S OIL IMPORTS. NEVERTHELESS,
THE ATTENTION-GETTING NATURE OF OIL AND THE VULNERABILITY
TO BOYCOTT BY THE INTERNATIONAL OIL COMPANIES, MANY OF WHICH

ARE AMERICAN, MAKES IT A LIKELY PROSPECT. WE FORESEE GROWING PRESSURE ON THE OIL COMPANIES AND WESTERN NATIONS TO SHOW MORE POSITIVE RECOGNITION OF THE PROBLEM AND WILLINGNESS TO JOIN IN PLANNING AIMED AT LIMITING OIL SUPPLIES TO RHODESIA.
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(B) SOME MEMBERS BELIEVED THAT CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN MOZAMBIQUE IN DEFENSE OF ITS TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AGAINST RHODESIAN INCURSIONS WOULD GROW. THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT OPPOSITION TO SUCH CUBAN INVOLVEMENT BY SOME FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS WOULD NOT NECESSARILY BE EFFECTIVE. THEREFORE, THE PANEL CONCLUDED THAT THE U.S. COULD BE FACED WITH SOME VERY DIFFICULT DECISIONS AS A RESULT OF GREATER CUBAN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN MOZAMBIQUE.

13. THE PANEL MADE THE FOLLOWING FURTHER POINTS:

(A) FRONT LINE

ITS COHESION IS THE MAJOR DYNAMIC OF FOREIGN POLICY DECISION-MAKING IN THE REGION. FRONT LINE ATTITUDES PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN DETERMINING POSITIONS WHICH ITS MEMBERS ASSUME ON SECURITY ISSUES OUTSIDE THE AREA. ONE OF THESE WAS ZAIRE. THERE FRONT LINE SUPPORT FOR NETO CONTINUED UNTIL A KEY PRINCIPLE INVOLVING THE SECURITY OF ONE OF ITS MEMBER COUNTRIES, I.E., TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, WAS THREATENED.

(B) NIGERIA

NIGERIAN INTEREST IN HELPING TO FIND A RESOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA. THE MEMBERS FOUND THAT NIGERIA'S INFLUENCE HAS BEEN A POSITIVE ONE EXERCISED IN THE INTEREST OF A PEACEFUL SOLUTION AND AGREED THAT THE U.S. SHOULD CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE IT.

(C) HUMAN RIGHTS

THE NEW U.S. EMPHASIS ON HUMAN RIGHTS HAS BEEN WELCOMED BY THE AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS IN THE AREA AS PROVIDING ADDED ASSURANCE OF LONG-TERM U.S. COMMITMENT TO PARTICIPATE
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IN A FAVORABLE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS OF MINORITY RULE AND RACISM OF THE AREA. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, THE PANEL WARNED THAT IT GIVES AFRICAN COUNTRIES A YARD-STICK BY WHICH TO MEASURE U.S. PERFORMANCE; A YARD-STICK WHICH THEY WILL NOT HESITATE

TO USE AGAINST US. THE COMPLEXITY OF THE ISSUE IS DEMONSTRATED BY

THE FACT THAT (EXCEPT BOTSWANA) NO NATION IN THE AREA IS IMMUNE FROM CRITICISM ON HUMAN RIGHTS GROUNDS.

(D) REFUGEES

THE PANEL WARNED THAT THIS IS AN INCREASINGLY SERIOUS ISSUE, REGARDLESS OF THE OUTCOME OF CURRENT INITIATIVES. THE U.S. CONTRIBUTION TO DATE HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANT BUT SMALL, AND THE RESPONSE SLOW. IT NOTED THAT BUREAUCRATIC COMPLEXITIES WHICH HAVE CREATED OBSTACLES TO A GREATER U.S. CONTRIBUTION AND STRESSED THE NEED FOR SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN ASSISTANCE BOTH TO INDIVIDUALS AND TO GROUPS, PROBABLY THROUGH THE UNHCR.

(E) ARMS TRANSFERS

THE GROUP FELT THAT OVER THE LONG TERM THE U.S. WILL GAIN BENEFIT FROM THE GROWING IMAGE IT IS GAINING OF RESTRAINT IN PROVISION OF ARMS TO THE CONTINENT. WHILE THE SOVIET UNION PRESENTLY DERIVED CONSIDERABLE CREDIT AS PRINCIPAL ARMS PURVEYOR IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, OVER THE LONG RUN WE BELIEVE THAT THIS IMAGE WILL TROUBLE THOSE COUNTRIES WITH DISSIDENT MOVEMENTS AND BRING NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE USSR. IN SPITE OF THE EMPHASIS ON AND CONCERN WITH ARMED WARFARE, THE COUNTRIES OF THE REGION RECOGNIZE THAT THEIR BASIC PROBLEMS ARE ECONOMIC AND THAT THE U.S. CAN PROVIDE AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE SIGNIFICANT ASSISTANCE THEY NEED. AT THE SAME TIME, THE GROUP WAS CONCERNED TO BE ABLE TO PROVIDE SMALL AMOUNTS OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE, WHICH IS SO CLEARLY AIMED AT LEGITIMATE SELF-CONFIDENTIAL

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DEFENSE, IN THE CASE OF BOTSWANA.

(F) THE OAU

THE PANEL THOUGHT IT WORTH REMARKING THAT AT NO TIME DID THE OAU COME INTO ITS DISCUSSIONS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE FRONT LINE IS AN EFFECTIVE, SUB-REGIONAL ORGANIZATION IN WHICH GENUINE SACRIFICE OF ECONOMIC AND SOMETIMES POLITICAL INTEREST HAS BEEN MADE BY ITS MEMBERS. THE GROUP, THEREFORE, BELIEVES THAT AT LAST IN THIS REGION, U.S. RECOGNITION OF, AND COOPERATION WITH, THE FRONT LINE WOULD PROBABLY BE MORE SIGNIFICANT THAN WITH THE OAU.

(G) FOREIGN ASSISTANCE

IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ON U.S. POSITION TOWARDS LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE, THE GROUP EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUED U.S. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE ACCOMPANYING ANY SERIOUS U.S. PARTICIPATION IN EFFORT TO FIND POLITICAL SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS OF RHODESIA AND

NAMIBIA. OUR CREDIBILITY, THE PANEL BELIEVED, WOULD BE
ERODED BY LIMITING OUR INVOLVEMENT TO THE POLITICAL AREA.
HOWEVER, IN PURELY DEVELOPMENTAL TERMS THE GROUP QUESTIONED
TO WHAT EXTENT U.S. NATIONAL INTERESTS COULD JUSTIFY LONG-
TERM ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (AS OPPOSED TO HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE)
ONCE THE POLITICAL PROBLEMS ARE ON THEIR WAY TOWARDS RESOLUTION.
IT NOTED THE MINERAL WEALTH OF THE REGION, PRIVATE INVESTMENT
POTENTIAL AND THE MAJOR INVOLVEMENT BY OTHER DEVELOPED NATIONS WITH
A MORE DIRECT INTEREST AS REASONS FOR ITS SKEPTICISM AT U.S.
LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE AREA. STEARNS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 22-Sep-1999 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETING REPORTS, MISSION CHIEFS MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 13-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ABIDJA04958
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: D770170-0864
Format: TEL
From: ABIDJAN
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197705110/baaaewiw.tel
Line Count: 340
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d16fe888-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 7
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2347087
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AFRICA COM CONFERENCE
TAGS: PFOR, PDIP, XJ, US, IV
To: STATE INFO ALGIERS MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d16fe888-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009